

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, where
~~wherein~~ the search query further includes a plurality of at least one user-selected ~~operator~~
operators associated with ~~a first~~ one of the search terms of the search query and where the
plurality of operators comprise a same operator repeated multiple times;

broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms based on the plurality of at least one user-
selected ~~operators~~ ~~operator~~ to produce a broadened search query, where broadening the one of
the one of the search terms comprises:

broadening the one of the search terms to an extent determined by a number of
times the same operator is repeated; and

executing a search using the broadened search query.

38. (Currently amended) The method of claim 37, where ~~wherein~~ the search query further
includes a user-selected delimiter associated with another ~~a second~~ one of the search terms that
indicates that the other ~~second~~ one of the search terms should not be broadened.

39. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
- receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms;
 - broadening one of the plurality of search terms;
 - excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query;
 - executing a search based on the search query, after excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms, to provide search results; and
 - evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions.
40. (Currently amended) The method of claim 37, where ~~wherein~~ broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:
- determining a meaning associated with the ~~first~~ one of the search terms.
41. (Currently amended) The method of claim 40, where ~~wherein~~ broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:
- determining a related concept based on the meaning.
42. (Currently amended) The method of claim 37, where ~~wherein~~ broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:
- modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing or restating the ~~first~~ one of the search terms.

43. (Currently amended) The method of claim 37, ~~where~~ ~~wherein~~ broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:

selecting a broadening search term associated with the ~~first~~ one of the search terms from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

44. (Currently amended) The method of claim 37, ~~where~~ ~~wherein~~ broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:

presenting at least one broadened search term associated with the ~~first~~ one of the search terms as at least one of a static list, a menu of selectable search terms, a set of checkboxes or a list of selectable search terms; and

receiving, from the user, a selection from the presented at least broadened search term ~~from the user~~.

45. (Currently amended) The method of claim 37, ~~where~~ ~~wherein~~ broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:

presenting at least one broadened search characteristic associated with the ~~first~~ one of the search terms as a hyperlink; and

forming the broadened search query responsive to a selection of the hyperlink by the user.

46-48. (Canceled)

49. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium containing instructions executable by at least one processor, the computer-readable medium ~~method~~, comprising:

one or more instructions for receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, where the search query includes multiple at least one first symbol symbols which ~~defines~~ define a user-assigned strength of broadening associated with ~~a first~~ one of the search terms of the search query;

one or more instructions for broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms to an extent determined by the user-assigned strength to produce a broadened search query, where a number of the multiple symbols determines the extent to which the one of the search terms is broadened;
and

one or more instructions for executing a search based on the broadened search query.

50. (Canceled)

51. (Currently amended) The computer-readable medium ~~method~~ of claim 49, ~~where~~ wherein the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with another a second one of the search terms that indicates that the other second one of the search terms should not be broadened.

52. (Currently amended) The computer-readable medium method of claim 49, where the one or more instructions for wherein broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:
one or more instructions for determining a meaning associated with the ~~first~~ one of the search terms.

53. (Currently amended) The computer-readable medium method of claim 52, where the one or more instructions for wherein broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:
one or more instructions for determining a related concept based on the meaning.

54. (Currently amended) The computer-readable medium method of claim 49, where the one or more instructions for wherein broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:
one or more instructions for modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing or restating the ~~first~~ one of the search terms.

55. (Currently amended) The computer-readable medium method of claim 49, where the one or more instructions for wherein broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:
one or more instructions for selecting a broadening search term associated with the ~~first~~ one of the search terms from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

56. (Currently amended) The computer-readable medium method of claim 49, where the one or more instructions for wherein broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:

one or more instructions for presenting at least one broadened search term associated with the ~~first~~ one of the search terms as at least one of a static list, a menu of selectable search terms, a set of checkboxes or a list of selectable search terms; and

one or more instructions for receiving, from the user, a selection from the presented at least broadened search term ~~from the user~~.

57. (Currently amended) The computer-readable medium ~~method~~ of claim 49, where the one or more instructions for ~~wherein~~ broadening the ~~first~~ one of the search terms comprises:

one or more instructions for presenting at least one broadened search characteristic associated with the ~~first~~ one of the search terms as a hyperlink; and

one or more instructions for forming the broadened search query responsive to a selection of the hyperlink by the user.

58-62. (Canceled)

63. (Currently amended) The computer-readable medium ~~method~~ of claim 49, where each of the multiple ~~first symbol~~ symbols comprises one of a graphical or character symbol.

64. (Currently amended) The computer-readable medium ~~method~~ of claim 51, where the user-selected delimiter comprises a ~~second~~ symbol that is different than the multiple symbols ~~first symbol~~.

65. (Currently amended) A system implemented within a computer device, comprising:

means for receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, where the search query further includes multiple at least one user-selected ~~operator~~ operators associated with one of the search terms of the search query and where the multiple at least one user-selected ~~operator~~ operators comprise multiple symbols ~~comprises a first symbol~~ that represent ~~represents~~ search term broadening;

means for broadening the one of the search terms based on the multiple at least one user-selected ~~operators~~ operator to produce a broadened search query, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms based on the multiple user-selected operators to produce a broadened search query comprises:

means for broadening the one of the search terms to an extent determined by a number of occurrences of the multiple symbols; and

means for executing a search using the broadened search query.

66. (Currently amended) The system of claim 65, where the multiple symbols ~~first symbol~~ ~~comprises~~ comprise one of a graphical or character symbol.

67. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with another of the search terms that indicates that the other of the search terms should not be broadened.

68. (Currently amended) The system of claim 67, where the user-selected delimiter comprises a ~~second~~ symbol that is different than the multiple symbols first-symbol.

69. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for determining a meaning associated with the one of the search terms.

70. (Previously presented) The system of claim 69, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for determining a related concept based on the meaning.

71. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing or restating the one of the search terms.

72. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for selecting a broadening search term associated with the one of the search terms from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

73. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for presenting at least one broadened search term associated with the one of the search terms as at least one of a static list, a menu of selectable search terms, a set of checkboxes or a list of selectable search terms; and

means for receiving a selection from the presented at least broadened search term from the user.

74. (Previously presented) The system of claim 65, where the means for broadening the one of the search terms includes:

means for presenting at least one broadened search characteristic associated with the one of the search terms as a hyperlink; and

means for forming the broadened search query responsive to a selection of the hyperlink by the user.

75-76. (Canceled)

77. (New) The method of claim 39, where broadening the one of the plurality of search terms comprises:

determining a meaning associated with the one of the plurality of search terms and
determining a related concept based on the meaning.

78. (New) The method of claim 39, where broadening the one of the plurality of search terms comprises:

modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing or restating the one of the plurality of search terms.

79. (New) The method of claim 39, where broadening the one of the plurality of search terms comprises:

selecting a broadening search term associated with the one of the plurality of search terms from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

80. (New) A method, comprising:

receiving a search query comprising a search term;

obtaining a set of broadened search terms based on the search term;

presenting the set of broadened search terms as a set of corresponding hyperlinks in a user interface;

receiving selection of a subset of hyperlinks of the set of hyperlinks to select a subset of the broadened search terms;

broadening the search query using the selected subset of broadened search terms; and

executing a search using the broadened search query.

81. (New) The method of claim 80, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

determining at least one meaning associated with the search term.

82. (New) The method of claim 81, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

determining one or more related concepts based on the at least one meaning.

83. (New) The method of claim 80, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

modifying, supplementing, or restating the search term.

84. (New) The method of claim 80, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

selecting a broadened search term of the set of broadened search terms that is associated with the search term from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.

85. (New) A method, comprising:

receiving a search query comprising a search term;

obtaining a set of broadened search terms based on the search term;

presenting a set of checkboxes in conjunction with the set of broadened search terms, where each checkbox of the set of checkboxes corresponds to one broadened search term of the set of broadened search terms;

receiving selection of a subset of the set of checkboxes to select a subset of the broadened search terms;

broadening the search query using the selected subset of broadened search terms; and
executing a search using the broadened search query.

86. (New) The method of claim 85, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

determining at least one meaning associated with the search term.

87. (New) The method of claim 86, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

determining one or more related concepts based on the at least one meaning.

88. (New) The method of claim 85, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

modifying, supplementing, or restating the search term.

89. (New) The method of claim 85, where obtaining the set of broadened search terms comprises:

selecting a broadened search term of the set of broadened search terms that is associated with the search term from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic meaning.